



# NORTHEAST IDAHO

BONNEVILLE, BUTTE, CLARK, CUSTER, FREMONT, JEFFERSON, LEMHI, MADISON, & TETON COUNTIES

## EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

April's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the Bonneville Labor Market Area (LMA) increased one-tenth of a percentage point over the month to 3.4 percent as shown in Northeast Table 1. Of the four counties in the LMA, all showed slight increases with the exception of Butte County that showed a large 1.50-percentage-point decrease. Rates of the four counties ranged from 3.0 percent, shared by both Butte and Bonneville Counties, to 4.2 percent in Bingham County. Year-over-year, the LMA decreased four-tenths of a percentage point with all four counties showing decreases. Butte County showed the largest year-over-year decrease of 1.5 percentage points. Idaho Falls, the largest city in the LMA, remained unchanged at 3.3 percent over the month, but decreased four-tenths of a percentage point over the year. The LMA's unemployment rate was 1.0 percentage point lower than the state's rate of 4.4 percent and 2.2 percentage points lower than the national rate of 5.6 percent.

Among the other six counties in Northeast Idaho, Clark County showed the largest monthly gain (seven-tenths of a percentage point to 6.8 percent) and Custer County showed the largest monthly loss (nine-tenths of a percentage point to 6.3). Year-over-year, Clark County showed a large 2.3-percentage-point increase while changes in other counties were minimal. Clark County has shown increases for several months. Because Clark County is the smallest county by population and second smallest in *Civilian Labor Force*, minor employment changes can make large changes in the unemployment rate (a percent of unemployed persons compared to the total labor force). Over the past year, large employer Larsen Farms has been reorganizing and some layoffs have occurred from mid-management and below. Since the county is largely agricultural, there is not a lot of other employment to choose from in the event of layoffs.

Northeast Idaho Table 1: Labor Force & Employment  
Bonneville, Bingham, Butte, and Jefferson Counties

	April 2004*	Mar 2004	April 2003	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
<b>INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE</b>					
<b>Seasonally Adjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	85,610	85,950	84,440	-0.4	1.4
Unemployment	2,930	2,860	3,180	2.4	-7.9
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.4	3.3	3.8		
Total Employment	82,680	83,090	81,260	-0.5	1.7
<b>Unadjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	84,380	84,080	83,160	0.4	1.5
Unemployment	2,770	3,280	2,950	-15.5	-6.1
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.3	3.9	3.5		
Total Employment	81,610	80,800	80,210	1.0	1.7
<b>JOB BY PLACE OF WORK</b>					
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS</b>	65,840	64,750	63,830	1.7	3.1
<b>Goods-Producing Industries</b>	9,780	9,410	9,740	3.9	0.4
Natural Resources & Mining	70	60	70	16.7	0.0
Construction	4,890	4,570	4,310	7.0	13.5
Manufacturing	4,820	4,780	5,360	0.8	-10.1
Food Manufacturing	2,800	2,750	3,060	1.8	-8.5
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	260	250	250	4.0	4.0
Machinery Manufacturing	410	420	450	-2.4	-8.9
Other Manufacturing	1,350	1,360	1,600	-0.7	-15.6
<b>Service-Providing Industries</b>	56,060	55,340	54,090	1.3	3.6
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	15,510	15,350	14,810	1.0	4.7
Wholesale Trade	5,350	5,290	5,120	1.1	4.5
Retail Trade	8,300	8,200	7,930	1.2	4.7
Utilities	120	120	120	0.0	0.0
Transportation	1,740	1,740	1,640	0.0	6.1
Information	970	940	980	3.2	-1.0
Financial Activities	2,190	2,180	2,120	0.5	3.3
Professional & Business Services	12,090	11,780	11,660	2.6	3.7
Educational & Health Services	6,780	6,720	6,300	0.9	7.6
Leisure & Hospitality	5,100	5,040	4,900	1.2	4.1
Other Services	2,020	2,000	2,270	1.0	-11.0
Government Education	5,100	5,140	5,170	-0.8	-1.4
Government Administration	6,300	6,190	5,880	1.8	7.1

\*Preliminary Estimate

\*\*Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

*Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* increased by 1,090 over the month to 65,840. The *Construction* industry was the largest contributor, followed closely by *Professional & Business Services*. Each added over 300 jobs. *Retail Trade* and *Government Administration* each added approximately 100 jobs. All four industries normally see increases this time of year with most gearing up to prepare for the summer months. The only decrease seen in an industry was a loss of 40 jobs in *Government Education*. Year-over-year, *Nonfarm Payroll Jobs* increased by 2,010. *Trade* added the most jobs year-over-year (600 jobs) with *Retail Trade* adding almost 400 of that. *Construction* came in a close second (580 jobs) with weather on its side and an overabundance of projects. *Professional & Business Services*, *Educational & Health Services*, and *Government Administration* each showed increases of over 400 jobs. Larger de-

creases were seen in *Manufacturing (Food Manufacturing and Other Manufacturing sectors)* at 540 jobs, while *Other Services* in the *Service-Providing Industries* lost 250 jobs.

## AREA DEVELOPMENTS

### Bonneville County

- The Idaho Falls City Council was unanimous on approving \$2 million for refurbishing the McDermott Field in Highland Park. This is where the area's professional baseball has played since 1940. The field is owned by the city and is the site where fans watch the Idaho Falls Chukars (renamed from the Padres) play baseball, along with high school teams and American Legion teams. It has the potential of hosting state and regional high school Babe Ruth Leagues and American Legion Leagues. The Idaho Falls Chukars will raise the other \$1.3 million needed to fix the bleachers and grandstands. The Park is located on Elva Street.
- Rocknak's Hardware Plus store on Broadway Avenue in Idaho Falls has announced plans to build a new 17,000-square-foot building near the present location. The \$1.1 million expansion is something owner Dave Rocknak has wanted to do for many years, and equity is now allowing the dream to come true. Rocknak's is virtually the only hardware store on the west side of Idaho Falls. The additional space from the new building will allow Rocknak's to be a full-project store for those interested in remodeling and will add a classroom for woodworking classes that could increase power tool sales.
- The Snake River BMX track has just completed remodeling at its Highway 26 location just northeast of Idaho Falls. The remodel allows for wider tracks for more side-by-side racing and higher speeds in the turns. It also adds more technical aspects that demand more technique to conquer at high speeds. Races are held every Thursday through the end of September with on-site registration at 5:00 p.m.

### Madison County

- Idaho Falls-based Smith Group purchased Rexburg's Madison Ford at 535 South Yellowstone Highway. Renovations and remodeling have given the dealership a Smith "look and feel." Aggressive pricing for quick liquidation made its sales number one in its zone in the first month of new ownership. The sale came about with the retirement of previous owner Doug Hancey.
- Taylor Corporation, parent company of Artco in Rexburg, acquired a new greeting and holiday card company. Executive Greetings Inc., the acquired company that was based out of Connecticut, will now be distributed between eight of Taylor's plants

with Artco's portion adding another 20 full-time positions and many seasonal positions for the October to December quarter. The acquisition could increase Artco's workload by 25 percent.

- The American Bus Association lists the Idaho International Folk Dance Festival that is held in Rexburg every summer in the top 100 events for bus tours this year. Already this summer three bus tour companies have made reservations for the event and the chamber feels that there will be more. The festival will start in Burley on July 26, move to Pocatello on July 30, and then finish up in Rexburg the week of August 2. Belgium, Latvia, Romania, Israel, the Philippines, Ukraine, and Slovakia have all secured visas and are ready to travel with the United States team. China is the only team that has not yet given confirmation to participate. For tickets, donations, volunteer work, or information, contact the Rexburg Chamber of Commerce at 356-5700.

### Fremont County

- St. Anthony is looking for tenants for its new business development center that is still under construction. Plans call for the 8,000-square-foot building to open this fall; it has no committed employers at this time since two have canceled agreements.

### Multi Counties

- U.S. Highway 20 now has one speed limit from Idaho Falls through Sugar City. Since the beginning of June, the speed limit was changed to 65 mph. Before, this section was 55 to 60 mph. The Idaho State Police requested the change and will now watch the section more closely. Although this change has gone into effect, it will have a temporary setback since the intersection of Highway 20 and Hitt Road, and the intersection of Highway 20 and St. Leon are considered two of the most dangerous intersections in Northeast Idaho. Because of this, full interchanges are being built to try to remedy the problem. More road construction will also occur as Highway 20 from Idaho Falls to Rigby will be resurfaced, the Holbrook Intersection will be extended, and a second half of the Ashton Bridge will be built. All of this should take place this summer, so work speed limits will be posted until the projects are finished.

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